



**Media Information**

**23 August 2011**

## **Trust Lands result defies tough economy**

Financial results and grants to the community by the Masterton Trust Lands Trust have remained strong despite another challenging year for the national and local economies.

A total of more than \$1 million in grants was distributed to the Masterton community in the 12 months to 31 March 2011, the second highest amount since grants broke the million dollar mark for the first time in 2008.

The value of trust property increased by 5.9 per cent to \$56.5 million, equity was up by five per cent on the previous year to \$40.4 million, and rental income increased by more than two per cent.

Announcing the annual result this week, Masterton Trust Lands Trust chairman Alan Sadler said the positive results were particularly pleasing in what had been one of the more difficult periods for Masterton and the general economy for some time.

“The increases in asset value, equity and rental income are the result of deliberate financial strategies of the past decade, particularly the investment in properties for a diverse range of tenants – national and local, large and small,” Alan Sadler said. “Developing successful relationships with all tenants has also been a key part of this.”

Rental income from the trust’s property investments is the sole source of the funds that form the annual grants to the Masterton community. “Despite the recession, we achieved a surplus that enabled us to maintain our support, at near-record levels, for key education and community programmes.”

Mr Sadler said education remained the focus of the grants programme with emphasis on benefitting all local students from early childhood through to tertiary level. Professional development programmes for teachers in the primary and secondary sectors were extended to include the early childhood sector. Since 2005, the

trust has granted more than \$1.1 million to professional development programmes for primary, intermediate and secondary schools.

Mr Sadler said the new early childhood programme, co-ordinated by Wairarapa REAP, would receive \$140,000 from the trust over the next two years. "This collaborative approach will vastly improve the ability of all teachers to access and share in quality professional development programmes and networking opportunities."

Through its annual one-off scholarship scheme, the trust contributed to the education of 301 tertiary students, including apprentices and students at polytechnics and universities throughout New Zealand.

General support for the community continued through \$315,533 in cash grants to a wide range of community groups.

The \$1.2 million development for longstanding tenant, McKenzies Carpet Court, was the highlight of a busy year for the trust's property portfolio. Other property activity included the upgrade of the KFC premises and securing Burger King and Lamberts Cycles as key tenants for the redevelopment property on the corner of Lincoln Road and Chapel Street. "These developments will enable us to continue to increase financial returns for the Trust which will ultimately benefit the community through education and other grants," Alan Sadler said.

The Masterton Trust Lands Trust is a 140-year-old public lands trust formed to own and manage surplus land not sold to Masterton's working class settlers.

Income from the trust's property rentals is distributed in the form of grants to assist educational, community and cultural activities within Masterton. This concept has played a key role in the evolution of the town since 1871 and continues to do so today.

The Trust's 139<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting will be held on Monday 29 August at 4.00pm at 189 Queen Street Masterton. Members of the public are welcome to attend.

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